Mitchell Urges Anti-Crime Pact

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By William L. Claiborne
Washington Post Staff Writer

Attorney General John N. Mitchell urged officials of Washington's suburbs last night to adopt a regional approach to crime prevention, including the sharing of intelligence systems, undercover agents and drug treatment programs.

In remarks prepared for delivery to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments at a meeting at the University of Maryland, Mitchell promised federal funds for such a "metropolitan enforcement group."

Noting that COG had already taken a step toward a collective anticrime program with the adoption last January of a police mutual aid agreement, Mitchell said, "There are other fields in which this kind of cooperation could be applied."

JOHN N. MITCHELL
. . . promises funds

The mutual aid pact to which he referred is designed to provide sharing of police manpower in the event of civil disturbances or natural disaster.

Mitchell also urged suburban governments to centralize other supportive police functions, such as data processing, crime laboratories and detective forces, and to make more use of auxiliary police in certain "public service duties." These would include protecting schools and controling traffic, the attorney general said.

He urged the COG members also to "open more opportunities for minority employment" in police departments. "Besides the obvious fairness of this concept, I believe it is essential to keeping law enforcement from being blunted by any racial issue," Mitchell said.

"My overwhelming feeling at this point is that we have now gone past the stage of conferring with each other and comparing notes," Mitchell said. He said "the time has come" for suburban jurisdictions to act on proposals that have been studied over and over again.

The attorney general cited recent FBI statistics that show that in the first six months of 1971, crime dropped 16 per cent in the District of Columbia while rising an average of 7 per cent in the suburbs, as compared to the same period in 1970.

Mitchell also cited figures disclosed on Sept. 13 at a regional crime conference at Lanham, Md., that disputed the widely held theory that District crime "spills over" into the suburbs.

"Actually, crime appears to have risen in the suburbs in Washington at a slightly lower rate than in the rest of the country," Mitchell said.